

When is New Moon Day? (*In Simplicity*)

The words "new moon" in Hebrew Scripture are taken from one word: *chodesh*. This word (H#2320) is based on the root word: *chadash* (H#2318) which is defined by Strong's as "to be new" or "to rebuild."

Seeing that Scripture commands us to observe the new moon (or the first day of our months) as holy (Numbers 10:10; Leviticus 23:24; Ezekiel 46:1-3), we must know when that day is.



The moon waxes from new to full, and then wanes from full to empty each lunar month. The cycle looks something like this.
<----- (from bottom, to right)

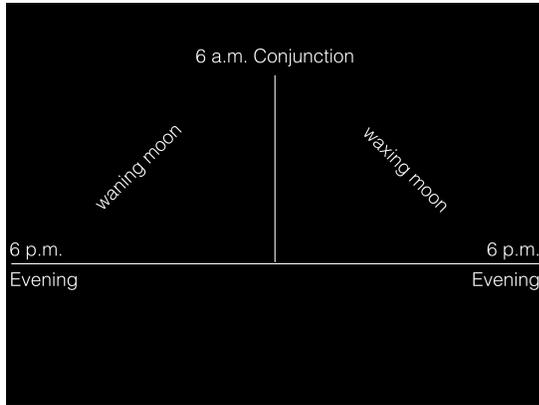
The pivot point in the moon's course is its conjunction with the sun. A conjunction occurs when the moon passes between the earth and the sun. Another way of putting it is that the sun and the moon "cross paths." Just before conjunction, the old moon is receiving its smallest reflection of *waning* light from the sun. Just after conjunction the new moon begins to grow, receiving its smallest reflection of *waxing* light from the sun. Conjunction can happen anywhere inside of an evening-to-evening day, but

the day that the conjunction occurs in always begins in a waning moon, and always ends in a waxing moon. In other words it begins inside an old moon (29 or 30 days old) and ends inside a new, rebuilding moon.

Our decision on what day is the first day of the month must be based upon the conjunction, because **after** that point is undeniably when the moon begins to rebuild. As the first century Levite-Israelite Philo says, "the new moon... **follows** the conjunction of the moon with the sun." (Special Laws 2.41, p.333, by FH Colson)

A question now arises: do we see the day the conjunction happens in as the last day of the old month or the first day of the new month? Here is the Biblical, natural, and simple reason why we should see conjunction day as the last day of the old month, and the day following conjunction as the first day of the new month.

The day conjunction happens in always begins in an old, waning moon. It is a fact that when conjunction day begins (at evening), the moon will **never** be new or building. The waning moon time period in this day does not belong to the new, rebuilding moon. (illustrated below)



The day following conjunction is the first day (evening-to-evening) that belongs to the rebuilding moon. This is an undeniable fact. There will never be a newer 24 hour, evening-to-evening day than this day. This day always begins in a waxing moon, but please note this next, important point. This day always begins in a waxing moon that is **LESS than 24 hours old**. When the day following conjunction begins, the moon will never be over 24 hours old. It's a perfect match for lunar day 1.

When we observe the day following conjunction as the first day of the month, it means that the day the conjunction happens in will always be the last day of the month, either day 29 or 30 depending on the length of the previous lunar cycle. This makes sense, not just because part of that day contains a waning moon, but because the FIRST part of that day will ALWAYS contain a waning moon. This means that the first part of the day the conjunction happens in **NEVER belongs to** the new, rebuilding moon. There is no need for us to try and make any comparisons or analogies that Scripture doesn't speak of. All we must do is follow the direct command to observe the day (evening-to-evening) of (belonging to) the new (rebuilding) moon. That day will always begin the evening **following** conjunction. When the first day of the month begins, the moon will be anywhere from 1 to 23 **hours** old, but NEVER 24 **hours** old, or I might say, NEVER 1 **DAY** old.

In studying about this I began to think, "This is all science and nature so surely someone before now contemplated about it." I later found a piece of writing from the first century B.C. by a man named Varro, a Roman farmer, probably a simple man. He writes this (On Agriculture, 1.37), "The lunar periods also must be taken into account; these are roughly twofold, as the moon waxes from the new to the full and then wanes again toward the new, until it reaches the intermenstruum, or time 'between two months,' on which day the moon is said to be 'last and first' ; hence, at Athens they call this day 'old and new,' while others call it 'thirtieth.'"

In closing, this is not complicated, it is simple. All one must know is the definition of the words "new moon" (*chodesh/chadash* = new, rebuilding), and recognize that conjunction is the pivot point from old (waning) to new (waxing). More detail could be given (I have elsewhere), but I wanted to show the simplicity of determining when new moon day is.

Brother Matthew Janzen (9.16.2014)